

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal of Opinion

Labor Reform and Domestic Politics

The identification of a leading contender for the Democratic Presidential nomination—Senator Kennedy—with the issue of labor reform is a symbolic indication of the changing nature of our domestic politics.

There are still, to be sure, plenty of signs that the change is not complete. Much of the struggle over the labor reform bills has been structured by the older battles over the very legitimacy of industry-wide unions, or even of any unions at all.

Senator Barry Goldwater's attacks on labor, with Walter Reuther as chief negative symbol, clearly echo the older argument over the question of unionization itself. The defeat of the Kennedy-Ives bill in the House last session had as a very important part of its complex cause the campaign against it by the chambers of commerce, whose desire for a more stringent labor reform bill was no doubt powered by the desire for an anti-labor bill. (It has been suggested that the chambers of commerce were in fact adroitly used by the unions that did not want the bill.)

In the present session the addition of the McClellan amendment to the new Kennedy-Ervin bill also has had a distinct relation to the older battles. This "bill of rights" for labor, like most of these misnamed programs for "rights" and "fair play" and "freedom" in this field (the right to work, for example), really have too individualistic and libertarian a conception of rights and freedoms, inadequately recognizing the collective dimension of the problems of the industrial civilization.

Although Senator McClellan no doubt had as his primary motive a desire for more powerful weapons for use against the characters who have been appearing before his committee, the effects of his amendment might reach well beyond needed reforms to create a powerful weapon against all of labor. On the labor side, too, the present issue may sometimes be interpreted in terms that echo the more fundamental economic and class fights of twenty years ago.

The problem of Kennedy and those proponents of labor reform who are not anti-labor has been to try to extract the labor reform issue out of the complex of political and economic issues of the past. That Kennedy would try to do this and that he would make such an effort a major part of his legislative work is a sign of the times.

Kennedy, as he has developed now, is a new kind of political leader. He is not primarily identified with an ideological position, as perhaps Senator Humphrey is. He is not the calculating manipulator of political feelings that the Vice President is. He does not show the rhetoric or the idealism of a Stevenson. Instead he combines the personality boy with the well-financed, non-ideological effort at technical excellence on specific issues, of which labor reform is the clearest example.

We may now see emerging men relatively detached from the ideological struggles of the past who appeal to an also relatively detached public by working to make responsible the giant organizations left behind by the earlier struggles.

W. L. M.

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THE VOICE OF THE PULPIT

THE DISMISSAL of the Rev. Robert B. McNeill from his pastorate in Columbus, Georgia, because of positions he had taken on the race issue is most unfortunate, but the reason given by the judicial commission of the local presbytery is shocking. *The New York Times* quotes the chairman of the commission as saying "the commission feels that the voice of the pulpit should be the voice of the congregation." If that had been said by some uninstructed layman it might not be surprising, but how could a representative of a presbytery say such a thing? It is far removed from Presbyterian doctrine. Why have a pulpit at all if it is to be no more than an echo of the congregation? Doubtless, when pressed, the commission will say that it was misunderstood, and yet those words fit its action very well.

It is the strength of Protestantism that both ministers and laymen have important roles in the church. The minister is chosen by the congregation or by its representatives, but he is chosen to preach the gospel, to be faithful in his teaching and preaching to the revelation of God in Christ. If he is arrogant and self-righteous, if he emphasizes one aspect of Christian teaching to the neglect of others, using it as a club with which to hit the congregation, he may cease to be useful. The congregation does have rights. But it is the responsibility of the minister to bring to the congregation his best understanding of the will of God as revealed in Christ and as interpreted within the church.

On this matter of race there are very few differences in any of the larger units of the church. It is significant that Mr. McNeill's own denomination, the Presbyterian Church, U. S. (Southern), has stood strongly for the very things that he has been preaching. The general assembly of that denomination year after year has opposed segregation in principle.

There are many other issues about which there is much uncertainty in the church at large, but the race issue is quite clear in principle. It is the function of a minister to bring to his local congregation the convictions that have been wrought out in the larger church in response to the revelation of God's purpose. On this very question the local difficulties are often serious, but what could be worse than to have the representatives of the presbytery pull the rug out from under a minister

and say that "the pulpit should be the voice of the congregation"? It is often hard to know exactly what should be done, but here we have a good example of exactly what should not be done.

J. C. B.

THE RED CHINA DISCUSSION

HOPES FOR a break in the logjam surrounding reasonable discussions of relations with Red China have been almost completely stifled. The success of reactionary Protestants and others in exploiting latent feelings of the primitive anti-Communist variety since the Fifth World Order Conference of the National Council of Churches urged U.S. recognition of Red China and her entrance into the United Nations has been disheartening indeed. They have been successful in deterring any major church body or assembly from doing more than tipping its hat to the conference's "courage," "honesty" and "forthrightness."

We believe this is most regrettable. There is little doubt in our minds but that the die is cast and we are moving inexorably in the direction of the urgings of the conference. It is therefore of utmost importance, we believe, that the debate not be stopped before it has begun. Voices must be raised fearlessly; the issue must be joined!

Once again the ideologists, in this case particularly those of the right wing, dominate the discussion and largely determine its nature, distorting many of the issues as they go. Some liberals tend to promise gains via face-to-face contact that are greater than there is any valid reason to expect. The reactionaries, meanwhile, exploit the idea that we would be merely granting prestige to renegade bandits who are willing, if necessary, to shoot their way into the UN. Loss of moral prestige before the world is cited as a further reason for continuing present U.S. policy. Both sides, it seems to us, overestimate the impact of a change in policy.

In this sense it is important that Americans recognize the basic impotence of U.S. policy to change the course of events in many areas of the world. Repeated references to our having lost China—"a land never ours to lose" as we have been reminded by Charles Burton Marshall—indicate a deep-rooted feeling of guilt. We must free ourselves from the illusion that China's course was determinable by American decision and that indigenous factors were of little import.

Likewise, those of liberal bent must be reminded that recognition and UN membership are not likely to "tame" the Peiping hierarchy and lead necessarily to appreciably warmer relations. Our experience with Russia (and that of the British with Peiping) should disabuse us of such illusions.

At the same time we may have lost, by our gradual withdrawal and withholding of recognition, an opportunity to try to influence events in China at an earlier stage. We should know by now that it does no good to act as if the Communists would go away if only we stared long enough and with sufficient disapproval. That policy has proven just as illusory as when we tried it on Spain, where it also failed and similarly strengthened the hand of the party in power as the nation naturally closed ranks behind Franco.

One of the most typically "American" aspects of this interlude is the way in which the whole matter has been placed on a "moral" level when it is obvious that morality actually has a rather modest role in what are essentially prudential considerations. One cannot, of course, separate moral concerns from prudential judgments. On the other hand it only obscures the issues to assert, as the reactionary ideologists do, that the reasons for a policy of non-recognition are primarily moral. For various reasons of domestic and foreign policy, recognition of Red China is not considered in the nation's interest by those formulating policy. In actuality, therefore, those who formulate policy to-

day refuse to recognize Red China not on grounds that are primarily moral but for reasons of domestic and foreign policy that are in the national interest.

When the United States had sufficient need of Franco Spain (or as Mr. Acheson put it at the time, "Spain is of strategic importance to the general defense of western Europe") it was possible to lay aside the moral considerations that led us to withdraw our envoy in 1946. The Government would be hard put to show that its new policy has resulted in any increases in Spain in civil or religious liberties or any greater freedom to exercise the elementary rights of organized labor. The gain in our sea and air strength, meanwhile, has been considerable. In yet another situation, that in South Africa, our need for uranium and other strategic materials (in addition to our own ambiguity about segregation) has made it possible for us to stomach the moral outrage of *apartheid*.

There can be little doubt, therefore, that the United States would alter its policy on China as soon as it was felt to be in the interest of the nation to do so. Thus the "moral" pose of protecting the world's virtue, particularly when our aid has hardly been solicited, is most unconvincing. It strikes us that a recognition of this fact should place the discussion on an entirely different plane, that of reality—which surely includes a profound and relevant view of morality—and that is exactly where we believe it belongs. W. H. C.

The Moral and Political Judgments of Christians

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

CHRISTIANS SEEM rather too certain that there are particularly "Christian" judgments on all the ills and perplexities of the world. They do not seem to know that an adequate social ethic has always been a problem in history. It has become a more troublesome problem in modern history. The old problem of an "unjust" economic system, on which it was possible to call down the "judgment of God," has given way to the tolerable equilibrium of power between big management, big government and big labor. It is not a matter of invoking the ultimate authority in dealing with the comparative rights, duties and perils of the modern welfare state. Discriminate judgment rather

than indiscriminate religious praise or blame is necessary. But any social ethical judgment has always been dependent on a careful discrimination between the competing factors and values.

In the modern day domestic problems have been tolerably solved, but foreign problems in a nuclear era have proved, if not insoluble, at least resistant to any simple solution. What is one to do about a situation in which the dread nuclear weapons cannot really be used but also cannot be disavowed? This dilemma presents the old pacifist issue in a new dimension. What do we mean by a "Christian" solution of this dilemma?

These modern perplexities merely add a new dimension to an old problem. It would probably shock many Christians, accustomed to moral self-

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esteem, to know that the Christian faith has not been particularly impressive in stating the norms of man's collective life. It has always had a valid and impressive account of the nature of the incongruous individual, so great and so small, so involved in creaturely finiteness and so uneasy about the divine judgment, so responsible in his freedom and so anxious about his death. The failure of any philosophy or science to give an adequate key to the self-understanding of this strange human, so great and so small, so troubled in conscience about ultimate judgments and so quick to make an ally of God in his disputes with his neighbor (though it is the very God who judges him); this failure gives the Christian faith perennial relevance in all history, though it may have difficulty in arriving at norms that give guidance to the conscience in these disputes.

Vertical Judgments

The basic difficulty in establishing a Christian social ethic consists in the fact that genuinely religious judgments are vertical judgments having to do with the encounter of the soul with God. The Psalmist confesses "Against thee and thee only have I sinned," and Jesus emphasizes the vertical character of the judgment by his harsh rejoinder to the young man who pled with him "Tell my brother to divide his inheritance with me." Jesus' answer was "Who has made me a divider between you?" and with that answer would seem to have ruled out a genuine social ethic.

The vertical nature of the moral judgment is fully revealed when God's judgment ceases to be mysterious and is given the specific content of sacrificial love. This is relevant when we judge ourselves and come to an awareness that our self-seeking is in fact self-destructive and that genuine self-fulfillment is the unintended consequence of all self-giving. But this radical divine judgment transmuted into self-judgment falls with equal severity upon all men. A genuine religious faith is bound to find all men equally involved in the sin of pride and self-sufficiency, no matter what their specific historical sins and virtues may be.

But what about these specific historical sins and virtues? How are we to judge them? That is the nub of the social-ethical question. It is fortunate that the Old Testament expresses the religious concern for social justice. It has been a great resource in preventing a purely individual interpretation of the Christian faith.

The prophets of Israel may be said to have stretched the vertical religious judgment to the very breaking point by appropriating the religious judgment to cover the justice of the covenant nation. In doing so they rigorously judged the injustices of the "princes and rulers" of Israel and succeeded in "pleading for the widow and orphan," for the poor against the rich, against those who "lie on beds of ivory," who are complacent, "who put far off the evil day [of judgment] and cause the seat of violence to come near." In short, they were more rigorous in the judgment of social evil, in stretching the vertical judgment, than the Greek philosophers who used the principle of justice, that of "giving each man his due" (Aristotle), to sanction the class structure of the Greek *polis*.

But no one would aver that the prophets gave an historical account of justice and injustice. They appropriated the punishment that the covenant nation received at the hands of the great empires surrounding it as divine judgments, though they knew that social evil in those empires was greater than any in Israel. They urged the covenant nation to appropriate for itself a vertical judgment from God out of the morally rather ambiguous history of the encounter of a small nation with great empires.

No one in Christian history has ever quite accomplished the task of transmuting a social ethic into a religious one. The difficulty is that religious absolutes are falsely introduced into the comparative judgments of history, or the equal sinfulness of all men before the ultimate judgment is falsely made into a basis for neutrality in any historic struggle.

Barth and the "Judgment of God"

It is significant that the greatest theologian of this generation, Karl Barth, having extricated Protestant Christianity from the sentimentalities of a liberal era that tried abortively to transmute an *agape* ethic into an ethic of social justice, naturally emphasized the vertical dimension of the religious life. Even at the beginning of the Nazi period he was hesitant to take sides on political issues on the ground that they were all equally sinful. But his robust humanity finally persuaded him to become an opponent of Nazism. In this he was helped by the fact that Nazism was such a monstrous evil that it was fairly easy to forget about hazardous comparative judgments and discern an unambiguous "judgment of God" upon the Nazis.

Absolute religious judgments in competitive historical situations are tolerable only if a terrible

evil is faced. Abraham Lincoln wisely chose, even in judging slavery, not to identify God's judgment with the righteousness of the North. Those who did feed the fires of vindictiveness that poisoned the relations between North and South even more than the terrors of the Civil War.

When the world finally faced the more complex issue of communism, rather than Nazism, Barth reverted to his original neutrality. He did not distinguish between moderate opposition to communism, coupled with criticism of the so-called "free world," and what he called "primitive anti-communism." He merely assured the Hungarian Protestants that no "absolutely good or absolutely evil government would appear in history." This is a religious truism and a political irrelevance when comparative judgments are needed. He also congratulated the Hungarians on not being involved in the Roman Catholic error of using a moral system to oppose communism. He said he didn't know whether it was Nazism's paganism, its anti-Semitism or some other characteristic that made it more evil than communism. This was perfectly consistent with his general disavowal of all comparative judgments that had no scriptural foundations.

Let us admit it, Barth was more consistent with his radical Protestantism in his neutrality toward communism than in his espousal of anti-Nazism. But he was, in each case, irrelevant to any careful analysis of the similarities and differences between Nazi and Communist despotism. The similarity was simply the monopoly of power in each case. The difference consisted in the reliance of the Nazis on military power, while communism subordinated military power to its utopian scheme of world salvation.

Even when Barth tried to approximate the divine neutrality by suggesting that the "judgment of God" rested upon both East and West and availed himself of specific historical judgments to prove the point, the specific judgments were too inexact to be convincing. Thus in his now famous letter he assured the East German pastor that the judgment of God was imminent upon both Russia and the West and that for the West it "would probably come from Asia and Africa." This could only refer to the evils of Western imperialism.

But the letter failed to include three specific historical details: (1) America, which Barth identifies with the "fleshpots of Egypt," was not involved in overt imperialism; (2) West Germany has won new health, having long since been di-

vested of her empire; and (3) Western imperialism was morally ambiguous rather than purely evil. It was probably irrelevant for pious Dutchmen to speak of the "judgment of God" upon the Netherlands when she lost Indonesia, since the Netherlands made solid contributions, adventtently or inadvertently, to the budding Indonesian nation.

In every case the religious judgment was too inexact to be meaningful. It is clear that an amateur intrusion of absolute religious judgments into the endless relativities of the political order, in which conscience requires the guidance of discriminate judgment, is a source of confusion. It is also clear that these theological judgments are not taken seriously by those who know all the facts, whether they be Christian or non-Christian.

Religious Absolutes and Political Relativities

A criticism of this form of radical Protestantism does not imply that other Christian approaches to the problems of discriminate justice have been strikingly successful. We should learn the modesty of admitting that every intrusion of the religious absolute into historic situations in which it is necessary to weigh competitive claims and contrasting values is a source of confusion. Every form of religious political ethic has been at one time or another such a source.

Protestants may be critical of the corruption of Christian universalism with papal absolutism and the idolatry of the church, but the Reformation was involved in the sanctification of national particularism and royal absolutism. Protestants may also be critical of the inflexible natural law theories of Catholicism, which persuade the church *inter alia* to proscribe birth control in a neo-Malthusian age; but natural law theories of social justice are certainly more acceptable and more rational than the biblicist legalism of early Calvinism.

Protestants are rightly critical of the Catholic ascetic movement that sought to realize the ultimate norms of the gospel, which are the fulfillment and the end of all law, as yet a rigorous law that could be fulfilled by rigorous striving. But this answer to the problem was no more in error than the effort of both sectarian and liberal Protestantism (in agreement with the Enlightenment) to make love (fraternity) into a simple political possibility. These errors culminated in the sentimentalities of the social gospel, which incidentally had the merit of delivering Protestantism

from the errors of a rigorous Calvinist individualistic legalism. This legalism could significantly merge in America with the individualism of social Darwinism and prosper in a day when the new industrialism made it quite passé.

The constant confusion between religious absolutes and political relativities almost reconciles one to Luther's doctrine of the "two realms" involving a sharp distinction between the spiritual and the political, the private and the public dimensions of human existence. The dualism is too absolute. The "realm of Caesar," the political realm, has only order and not justice for its norm; there is interest only in "evangelical" but not in "civil" freedom, for Luther was more interested to remove the priest as intermediary between God and man than to restrain the absolute power of the prince. But the doctrine has its points, particularly when alternate errors are considered.

If one were to canvass the whole spectrum of Christian doctrine for the most adequate solution for relating the law of love to the law of justice, which the political order demands, and for the most adequate relation of religious absolutes with historical relativities, 17th century Calvinism would come off best, in my opinion, for two reasons. One is that the left-wing Calvinists, the independents Milton and Saltmarsh, transmuted evangelical liberty into civil liberty and the theory of religious toleration; and the other is that the whole spectrum of Calvinist sectarianism in Cromwell's army was united in its devotion to the creation of a just political order, transmuting the impulse of love into the passion for justice. What they did not accomplish themselves was accomplished by the providence of God. For they gave so many and sometimes contradictory answers to the problems of political justice that they inadvertently, as well as advertently, made a pluralistic and "open" society both necessary and possible.

In a day when Christians, with other people, must guard the dignity of the individual in a mass society and must come to the best possible solution of the nuclear dilemma, they would greatly profit by a modest survey of past mistakes. The effort of Christian churches to apply the gospel to the tangled affairs of man's communal life should be informed by this modesty rather than by frantic efforts to prove either that Christians are better than other people or that they have an esoteric and mysterious reason for doing the right things. (As for instance the reason for opposing

the Nazis—not because Nazism was an intolerable tyranny but because "Christians must bear witness to Christ's resurrection from the dead." This advice of Barth to the Christians in Britain in his "Letter to Britain" is still taken seriously by some young theologians.)

It is equally disturbing that other young Christians should think it important to invent a "Christian" reason for abstaining from murder other than the age-old and universal respect for the sanctity of human life. Other young theologians think it would solve our problems if only Christians would insist that "loyalty to Christ is superior to all other loyalties." This simple solution does not take the conflict between lower loyalties into account, nor the long history of fanaticism derived from dressing lower loyalties in the garment of Christ. Clearly we are not modest enough either to bear our distinctive witness to the generation or to avoid the peculiar vices of even the best religion when it enters the political world.

The Validity of the Christian Faith

The Christian faith has interpreted the human situation in terms that have been validated, in so far as any faith can be validated, by the very course of modern history. The nuclear dilemma has refuted both Marxist and liberal progressive views of history which assumed that history would lead to a solution of historical problems. Instead history has enlarged all the perennial problems.

For the Christian faith the revelation in Christ is the key to both the human and the divine mystery. Christ is at once the revelation of the true man, the "second Adam," and of the mystery of the relation of the divine mercy to the divine justice. As man, the "perfection" of Christ means a sacrificial love that reaches beyond history in the sense that it is a type of perfection illustrating the freedom of man over all historical and natural conditions, and his ability to defy the prudential concerns for historical success.

The admonition: "If any man would come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me," is a challenge to sacrificial heroism that the martyrs and heroes of history have accepted, but which remains for ordinary pedestrian Christians the outer rim of possibility and impossibility, reminding us that there are no prescribed limits of goodness for human conduct. It does establish the frame of human freedom and dignity, and ideally prevents legalistic definitions of the good

from becoming the ultimate definitions. This is the significance of the Pauline challenge: "Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has set you free."

If this dimension of the revelation in Christ is taken alone, however, Christianity must create a strenuous moral striving, generating either Catholic asceticism or the even more dubious Protestant effort to make love the simple possibility of all human relations, neglecting the obvious fact that all men, even consecrated men, have an ineradicable self-regard that makes a just adjudication of the competitive interests necessary.

The Protestant Reformation was so necessary and creative because it emphasized the other dimension of the Christ revelation, that which not only recognized but emphasized the fact that all human virtues are fragmentary and that no one can overcome the hiatus between human sin and divine holiness by rigorous moral striving. Christ on the cross was the revelation of the divine mercy. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" was the good news of the gospel that in a sense relaxed the moral tension which the first dimension of the gospel created. Therefore the Reformation emphasized "justification," a legal term for forgiveness, rather than sanctification or perfection and embraced the paradox that the only possibility of loving and forgiving is in the mood of contrition and gratitude in which the believer knows himself both in need and in reception of the ultimate forgiveness.

It must be apparent to any honest student that these two dimensions of the revelation in Christ bring into focus the whole biblical faith. They establish what experience has proved to be true about the freedom of man, his "dignity": the moral ambiguity of that freedom, his "misery," and the precarious character of that dignity. The situation then is that the Christian gospel is the clearest disclosure of the human situation. It includes an understanding of both the fact that man cannot accept any judgment as final except the ultimate judgment and the reason why he is found guilty before that judgment even though he may be regarded as righteous in any of the lower courts.

These are aspects of the Christ revelation which is not only the "wisdom of God" in helping us to understand ourselves but also the "power of God" in renewing our life and infusing the gratitude and humility that is the basis of charity and of the clarification of the divine mystery that is the basis of faith.

The Ambiguity of Human Virtue

But we should raise the question of how many of the facets of the biblical truth, particularly those in the New Testament, are directly applicable to our social situation. Perhaps the fact that not many are directly applicable accounts for the errors in which the Christian witness to the communities of mankind has been involved. Do nations ever really sacrifice themselves for the common good? Or is the limit of their virtue that they find a point of concurrence between their good and a common good? If they are able to be devoted to the common good, does that exceed the good of a common civilization (Western Christian civilization for instance), or does it include the future of mankind, involving both our civilization and a competitive civilization? We are now in a situation in which it is desperately necessary to transcend the fate of our civilization and be concerned with the future of mankind. But one has the uneasy feeling that this concern is beyond the capacity of nations as nations, though fortunately not beyond the capacity of individuals.

The emphasis in the gospel on the ambiguity of human virtues and the consequent destructive as well as creative possibilities of human freedom is clearly relevant to the understanding of our collective predicament in a nuclear age; but it is more clearly negatively relevant than affirmatively so. It teaches us not to regard history as our redeemer. The prophetic emphasis on the majesty of God, dwarfing and judging all human majesties, is clearly relevant to all nations but it is as clearly defied by them.

As we approach the endless and complicated problems of adjudicating and arbitrating competitive collective interests the contribution of the Christian can be the reminder that our devotion to "moral principles" is tainted with our interests, and that therefore we "ought not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think." In addition we need an honest scrutiny of the relevant facts in which the honest secularists may or may not exceed us in competence and diligence.

We cannot, in short, make the Christian faith relevant to the collective problems of our day without more modesty in recognizing past mistakes, present difficulties and the need of religiously neutral instruments of judgment. We cannot achieve this modesty if we insist on regarding the Christian faith as a simple panacea for all human ills, individual and collective.

CORRESPONDENCE

A Wistful Exaggeration

TO THE EDITORS: The June 8 issue of *Christianity and Crisis* is a typically thoughtful and generous gesture. Is a very marginal question in order?

Is it *really* so that in Europe there is more Protestant-Roman Catholic dialogue? I have the impression that conversations—granted that they are rarely duplicated here—are confined to the professional theologians and, when reported in the American religious press, are wistfully exaggerated.

I have the impression, on the other hand, that there is a degree of cooperation between Protestants and Catholics in this country on civic issues not matched in Europe where the true, if relative, autonomy of the temporal order would be doubtfully conceded. Despite common suffering under Nazi oppression, despite mutual help in the Resistance, European Protestants and Catholics have not shown any great disposition for common action on social problems.

In this country Protestant and Catholic opinion can be mobilized to support, for example, government aid to underdeveloped countries. In Europe—such is my impression—divergent views on the nature of the state would hamper the formulation of a common position. Of course, there is a lot of history as well as theology in this situation.

Whatever the judgment on its worth, the National Conference of Christians and Jews does have 62 field offices. Its European counterpart, World Brotherhood, doesn't seem to be able to get off the ground.

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Protestant-Catholic Dialogue

The response to the June 8 issue from both Roman Catholics and Protestants has been gratifying. We have received a number of requests for reprints and we are pleased to announce that additional copies are now available: 25¢ each for the first ten; 10¢ each for larger orders.

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No Plot, Just Kinship

TO THE EDITORS: I cannot help but agree with the Roman Catholic writers in your issue of June 8 when they point out that one of the reasons why Protestants are nervous is the diminution of their power. But I cannot agree with Father Weigel that "there is no ground in Catholicism for this nervousness." That is to say, I agree instead with John Bennett's lead editorial where he says: "Catholics themselves should fully realize that a large and well-organized Roman Catholic majority in an American city is difficult for non-Catholics to live with!"

Item: "Of thirty-four persons in the leadership of city departments only three are Protestants. Of 208 judges only eleven are Protestants. Of the top twenty-two positions in the city's Department of Public Welfare only one is filled by a Protestant and all policy decisions of this department are made by the members of one church." (From a speech given by Dan Potter of the Protestant Council of Churches in New York as reported in *The New York Times*, April 26, 1959.)

This kind of report is what concerns me. I see no "Romish plot," but I clearly see signs of a Catholic monopoly developing out of Protestant apathy and Catholic feelings of kinship, etc. Where Protestants are in the majority I doubt if the situation is quite so one-sided.

I hope, with Dr. Bennett, that no political party will be punished for choosing to nominate a non-Catholic for the Presidency, but I believe, if Sen. Kennedy or another Catholic is nominated, there will be a far greater "Catholic bloc" vote than a Protestant bigot vote.

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